



Wisconsin Republican gubernatorial candidate Tim Michels, left, speaks as former President Donald Trump, right, listens at a rally Aug. 5, 2022, in Waukesha, Wis.

Associated Press

Governor's races take on new prominence, with higher stakes

By SARA BURNETT and JOHN HANNA

Associated Press

HUTCHINSON, Kan. (AP) — Governor's races often are overshadowed by the fight for control of Congress during midterm elections. But this fall, the nation's political future hangs just as

much on governor's mansions as it does on Capitol Hill. With abortion rights, immigration policies and democracy itself in the balance, both parties are entering the final weeks before the Nov. 8 election prepared to spend

unprecedented amounts of money to win top state offices. Those elected will be in power for the 2024 election, when they could influence voting laws as well as certification of the outcome.

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Representatives of the Prime minister of Aruba elaborates on interesting meetings during UNGA
It is important to help smaller countries like Aruba to face recent challenges



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Governor's races take on new prominence, with higher stakes

Continued from Front

And their powers over abortion rights increased greatly when the U.S. Supreme Court in June left the question to states to decide.

"Governor's races matter more than ever," said North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, chair of the Democratic Governors Association, the group working to elect Democrats to lead states. For Democrats, Cooper said, governors "are often the last line of defense" on issues that have been turned over to states, including gun laws and voting rights in addition to abortion. That's been especially true in places with Democratic governors and Republican-controlled legislatures, such as Wisconsin and Kansas — states both parties have made top targets for victory in November. Democrats are leading Republican candidates in two important battleground states with GOP-led statehouses, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly is the only Democratic governor running for reelection in a state carried by former President Donald Trump in 2020. The former legislator won the office in 2018 against a fiery conservative after running as a moderate who promoted bipartisanship.

She now faces three-term state Attorney General Derek Schmidt, who has repeatedly tried to tie her to President Joe Biden and criticized her as too liberal for the red state. Schmidt's campaign has been hurt, however, by a third-party bid from a conservative state lawmaker.

During a debate at the Kansas State Fair this month, Schmidt portrayed Kelly's position on abortion as too extreme, telling a crowd she supports abortion without restrictions.

Kansas has been the unlikely site of Democratic hopes in regard to abortion rights. In August, Kansas voters overwhelmingly defeated a proposed amendment to the state constitution that would have allowed the



Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers speaks during an event attended by President Biden at Henry Maier Festival Park in Milwaukee, Sept. 5, 2022.

Associated Press

GOP-controlled Legislature to greatly restrict or ban abortion. Kelly opposed the measure, though she has tried to focus her campaign elsewhere.

Schmidt said he respects the outcome of the vote but that the abortion debate isn't over.

"What was not on the ballot was Governor Kelly's position," he said.

Throughout nearly two decades in elective politics, Kelly has opposed nearly every restriction on abortion now in Kansas law. But asked about Schmidt's characterization of her position on abortion, she said, "You know, I have never said that."

Kelly hasn't emphasized abortion as an issue, though many Democrats think it would help her. Instead, she has been touting the state's fiscal strength and her work to lure businesses and jobs.

"Maybe I'm not flashy, but I'm effective," she said at the end of the state fair debate.

In Wisconsin, Democratic Gov. Tony Evers warns voters that democracy is on the ballot this fall and notes he has vetoed more bills than any governor in modern state history, including measures Republicans pushed to change how elections are conducted.

Evers faces businessman Tim Michels, who was endorsed by Trump. Michels has claimed the 2020 presidential election was rigged — a lie Trump has pushed in an effort to overturn his loss to Biden — and supports changes to voting and election laws in the state, a perennial presidential battleground.

Michels is among several Trump-backed nominees who emerged from sometimes brutal GOP primaries. In some cases, more moderate or establishment Republicans warned that the far-right pick endorsed by Trump would struggle to win in a general election.

Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey, chair of the Republican Governors Association, acknowledged the intraparty turmoil during a discussion at Georgetown University's Institute of Politics and Public Policy last week.

"We're a divided nation right now, and it is very tribal. And much of that crept into this cycle," said Ducey, who is term-limited.

The RGA doesn't endorse in primaries. But as governor, Ducey endorsed businesswoman Karrin Taylor Robson for Arizona's GOP nomination for governor. She lost to former TV news anchor Kari Lake, who had Trump's backing.

Ducey and Trump have

feuded over the governor's refusal to cede to Trump's wishes and overturn the 2020 election results in his state. Lake has said she would not have certified Biden's victory, even though it has been affirmed by multiple reviews.

Cooper said the DGA will be "leaning in hard" in Arizona as well as in a tight contest in Georgia, where GOP Gov. Brian Kemp is facing Democrat Stacey Abrams, a former state legislative leader who lost a close 2018 race to him. In the primary, Kemp easily defeated former Sen. David Perdue, who was endorsed by Trump.

Both the Democratic and Republican governors associations entered 2022 having raised record amounts of money — over \$70 million each — in what they say is a sign that voters are increasingly focused on state races. Cooper attributed some of the increased interest to Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election results.

The RGA is bullish about defending Republican governorships in Arizona and Georgia, and is heavily focused on picking up a handful of blue states in the West, including Oregon and New Mexico.

At the top of the list is Nevada, where Clark County

Sheriff Joe Lombardo is among Republicans' most prized recruits this election cycle and is challenging Gov. Steve Sisolak.

In Oregon, GOP hopes rest on an independent candidate siphoning enough support from the Democrat and allowing the Republican to pull out a victory.

Democrats, meanwhile, are confident they will take back governorships in Massachusetts and Maryland, two blue states currently led by moderate Republicans, after far-right Republicans won their party's nominations.

Pennsylvania, a top presidential battleground, is another state where the GOP nominee could hurt Republicans' chances in November. GOP voters chose Doug Mastriano from a crowded field, picking a Trump-backed candidate who opposes abortion rights without exceptions, spread conspiracy theories about the 2020 election and organized bus trips to the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, the day of the violent insurrection. He faces Democratic Attorney General Josh Shapiro.

Asked about the race during the discussion at Georgetown, Ducey was blunt. "Another axiom that we have at the RGA is that we don't fund lost causes, and we don't fund landslides," he said.

In Michigan, a swing state where Trump and his allies also tried unsuccessfully to overturn his 2020 loss, Trump-backed nominee Tudor Dixon won a chaotic GOP primary. Democrats have repeatedly criticized Dixon for her stance against abortion, including in cases of rape or incest. A measure to enshrine abortion rights in the state constitution also will be on the November ballot, and Democrats are hoping it will help their candidates.

First-term Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has millions more in her campaign fund than Dixon, but said after an appearance at the Detroit Auto Show that she was taking nothing for granted. □

Biden seeks closer ties with Philippines after 'rocky' past

By AAMER MADHANI

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Joe Biden pledged on Thursday in his first face-to-face meeting with new Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to work to strengthen relations with the Pacific nation after what he said had been some "rocky times" in the past.

Meeting on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, the leaders discussed tensions in the South China Sea, the long-standing security relationship between the United States and the Philippines, the state of the global economy, and other issues. Biden said they would also address human rights.

Biden also noted that the Philippines was among U.S. allies to quickly condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"We've had some rocky times, but the fact is it's a critical, critical relationship, from our perspective. I hope you feel the same way," Biden said at the



President Joe Biden meets with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., Thursday, Sept. 22, 2022, in New York

start of the meeting.

The relationship hit bumps during the presidency of Marcos' predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte.

Human rights groups say Duterte's "war on drugs" resulted in thousands of extrajudicial killings. According to human rights groups,

virtually all the killings, carried out by police and armed vigilantes, occurred without due process, and the vast majority of victims were unarmed, poor low-level offenders. The U.S. government has suspended counter-narcotics assistance to the Philippine

National Police since 2016. Thursday's talks come amid heightened tensions between the U.S. and China over America's Taiwan policy. The "One China" policy recognizes Beijing as the government of China but allows informal relations and defense ties with Tai-

wan. China claims the self-ruled island as its own.

Marcos, the son and namesake of the country's former dictator, took office in June. He has said he wants to pursue closer ties with China, which has also sought to court him.

Biden has put a premium on improving relations with Pacific nations in the early going of his presidency. He sees a rising China as the most threatening economic and national security adversary to the United States. Marcos underscored to Biden that the Philippines is "your partners, we are your allies, we are your friends." He also thanked the U.S. for its "massive" assistance during the pandemic, including sharing COVID-19 vaccines, and for its role in ensuring peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

"The role of the United States in maintaining the peace in our region is something that is much appreciated by all the countries in the region, and the Philippines, especially," Marcos said. □

Associated Press

U.S. sanctions Iranian morality police after woman's death



Exile Iranians of the National Council of Resistance of Iran gather in front of the embassy of Iran in Berlin, Germany, Sept. 20, 2022 after the death of an Iranian woman held by the country's morality police.

Associated Press

By FATIMA HUSSEIN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government on Thursday imposed sanctions on Iran's morality police and leaders of other government agencies after the death of a woman who'd

been detained over an accusation she violated the country's dress code by wearing her Islamic headgear too loosely.

The sanctions come after at least nine protesters have been killed in clashes with Iranian security forces since

violence erupted over the weekend because of the young woman's death.

The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control also designated the leaders of the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security, the Army's Ground Forces, the Basij Resistance Forces and other law enforcement agencies for the sanctions, which deny them access of their properties and bank accounts held in the U.S.

"These officials oversee organizations that routinely employ violence to suppress peaceful protesters and members of Iranian civil society, political dissidents, women's rights activists, and members of the Iranian Baha'i community," the Treasury said in a news release.

The morality police detained 22-year-old Mahsa Amini last week, saying she

didn't properly cover her hair with the Islamic headscarf, known as the hijab, which is mandatory for Iranian women.

Amini collapsed at a police station and died three days later.

Police say that she died of a heart attack and deny that she was mistreated. The government released video footage purporting to show the moment she collapsed. Her family says she had no history of heart trouble, and her death in police custody has triggered daring displays of defiance from protesters, in the face of beatings and possible arrest.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the U.S. calls on the Iranian government "to end its violence against women and its ongoing violent crackdown on free expression and assembly." "Mahsa Amini was a cou-

rageous woman whose death in Morality Police custody was yet another act of brutality by the Iranian regime's security forces against its own people," Yellen said.

Amini's death has prompted Iranians to take to the streets of Tehran and other parts of the country. Many Iranians, particularly the young, have come to see her death as part of the Islamic Republic's heavy-handed policing of dissent and the morality police's increasingly violent treatment of young women.

An anchor on Iran's state television suggested the death toll from the mass protests could be as high as 17, but he did not say how he reached that figure. Iran has faced global condemnation over Amini's death, with the U.N. human rights office calling for an investigation. □

Fugitive in massive Navy bribery case caught in Venezuela

By **JULIE WATSON**
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A Malaysian defense contractor nicknamed "Fat Leonard" who orchestrated one of the largest bribery scandals in U.S. military history has been arrested in Venezuela after fleeing before his sentencing, authorities said Wednesday.

The international manhunt for Leonard Glenn Francis ended with his arrest by Venezuelan authorities Tuesday morning at the Caracas airport as he was about to board an airplane for another country, the U.S. Marshals Service said. Francis had traveled to Venezuela from Mexico with a stopover in Cuba, Interpol Venezuela Director General Carlos Garate Rondon said in a statement posted on Instagram. Francis was headed to Russia and was arrested at the main international airport in Caracas, the agency said. The arrest came on the eve of his scheduled sentencing in a federal court in California for a bribery scheme that lasted more than a decade and involved dozens of U.S. Navy officers. There was no immediate word on when he might be extradited to the United States.



This undated photo provided by the U.S. Marshals Service shows Leonard Francis.

Associated Press

At the sentencing hearing Thursday, U.S. District Court Judge Janis Sammartino announced to the court that Francis was in custody in Venezuela and that a "no bail arrest warrant" had been issued. "This turn of events raises several issues, and obvi-

ously will have an impact on other cases," she said. A sentencing hearing for four Navy officers who went to trial in the case and were found guilty is set for October. Prosecutors asked the court to note that Francis failed to appear at his sentencing

hearing as ordered, while defense attorneys notified the court that they would be filing a motion severing their ties with Francis due to an "irreparable break down of the attorney-client relationship."

Sammartino set a Dec. 14 status hearing for Francis with the caveat that all parties could meet sooner depending on how events unfold.

"I believe that's all we can accomplish this morning," Sammartino said.

The U.S. government faces an uphill challenge returning the fugitive back to American soil. The U.S. government doesn't recognize Nicolas Maduro's socialist government, has no embassy in the country and has imposed crushing sanctions on the country that has further embittered relations. Law enforcement cooperation between the two countries is rare.

Francis was under home arrest in San Diego when he cut off his GPS ankle bracelet and escaped on Sept. 4. Ten U.S. agencies searched for Francis and authorities issued a \$40,000 reward for his arrest.

U.S. authorities also issued a red notice, which asks law enforcement worldwide to provisionally arrest some-

one with the possibility of extradition. Malaysia and Singapore both have extradition agreements with the United States.

Francis pleaded guilty in 2015 to offering prostitution services, luxury hotels, cigars, gourmet meals and more than \$500,000 in bribes to Navy officials and others to help his Singapore-based ship servicing company, Glenn Defense Marine Asia Ltd. or GDMA. Prosecutors said the company overcharged the Navy by at least \$35 million for servicing ships, many of which were routed to ports he controlled in the Pacific. Francis had been allowed to remain in home confinement to receive medical care while he cooperated with the prosecution. With his help, prosecutors secured convictions of 33 of 34 defendants, including more than two dozen Navy officers.

Sammartino had feared Francis would run when she denied a request four years ago to allow him to be under house arrest without around-the-clock security guards.

The judge repeatedly maintained that security guards must be on site for Francis to be on house arrest, despite his poor health. □

Heckler who slapped Giuliani on back can have charge dropped

NEW YORK (AP) — A man charged with assault after he was seen on a video slapping the back of former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani accepted a deal Wednesday to have the charges dismissed. According to the Richmond County district attorney's office, the case has been adjourned in contemplation of dismissal, which means the charges will be dropped in six months if the man stays out of trouble. The incident occurred in June while Giuliani, 78, was at a Staten Island supermarket in support of his son Andrew's ultimately unsuccessful bid to win the Re-

publican party's nomination for governor. Giuliani was standing with a group of people when a man



Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani arrives to the ceremonies to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Sunday, Sept. 11, 2022, at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in New York.

Associated Press

walking past reached out, touched Giuliani's back with an open palm and then said something as he walked away.

Giuliani appeared to barely react in the video, but later said it felt "like somebody shot me" or that he had been hit by a boulder. After slapping Giuliani's back, police alleged the man said, "What's up, scumbag?" He was arrested and spent more than 24 hours in jail. In a statement read in court Wednesday, Assistant Richmond County District Attorney Darren Albanese said the man "violated a basic social contract which is a lesson taught when

we are young keep your hands to yourself." But the district attorney said proving in court that the man caused physical injury or intended to do so would be "extremely difficult." Susan Platis, an attorney with the Legal Aid Society's Staten Island trial office who represented the man, said he has no prior criminal record and "did not commit any criminal act, and this outcome, which will ultimately dismiss the case in its entirety, reflects that reality." A message was left Wednesday at an email address listed for Giuliani and with a lawyer who frequently represents him. □

EU talks up Russia sanctions but consensus may prove elusive

By LORNE COOK
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union appears determined to respond to new Russian attempts to annex parts of Ukraine with more sanctions, but finding a consensus among member countries is becoming increasingly difficult as measures meant to punish Moscow bite into their own economies.

The 27-nation bloc has imposed six rounds of sanctions on Russia since President Vladimir Putin ordered his forces into Ukraine on Feb. 24. Banks, companies and markets have been hit even parts of the sensitive energy sector and more than 1,200 officials been targeted with asset freezes and travel bans.

What could have taken years to agree on in the past was achieved in just over three months relative light speed for the EU. But European economies already battered by the COVID-19 pandemic are now fighting high inflation, with skyrocketing electricity and natural gas prices.

The spur for the EU to act again was the announce-



From left, French President Emmanuel Macron, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, President Joe Biden, Connie Mudenda (RED) ambassador and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol pose for photos during the Global Fund's Seventh Replenishment Conference, Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

ment that Russian-controlled regions in eastern and southern Ukraine plan to hold referendums on becoming part of Russia. This could allow Moscow to escalate the war, especially after Putin's decision to call up 300,000 military reservists.

EU foreign policy chief Jo-

sep Borrell said Wednesday that "Russia, its political leadership, and all those involved in organizing these 'referenda' as well as in other violations of international law and international humanitarian law in Ukraine will be held accountable." "Additional restrictive measures against Russia will be

brought forward as soon as possible in coordination with our partners," he said in a statement after chairing an emergency meeting of EU foreign ministers on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

But political declarations by officials based in Brussels

are the easy part. Agreeing on new measures has proven exceedingly difficult. Energy interests are notably hard to overcome. Hungary has led resistance to sanctions that might hit its supplies from Russia, but it isn't alone in hesitating.

The last round of sanctions was announced on May 4, but only agreed on four weeks later, as concerns over oil divided member countries. Rather than a new set of sanctions, a "maintenance and alignment" package was sealed in July, mostly to close loopholes on measures already agreed upon.

That said, the mayor of Moscow was one of 54 more people whose assets were frozen and Sberbank a major Russian financial institution was also targeted. Meanwhile, technical work on a seventh package has quietly continued.

Pressed by reporters in New York for details about what might be coming, Borrell said the sanctions would target "new areas of the Russian economy, especially if I can be a little more concrete the technological ones." □

Hamas threatens violence over contested Jerusalem holy site

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Palestinian militant group Hamas on Thursday threatened hostile actions against Israel over what it called "violations against Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa

Mosque" ahead of the upcoming Jewish High Holidays.

Hamas's threats came just ahead of Sunday's Jewish new year, and a day after a group of Jewish religious

extremists visited a contested holy site revered by both Jews and Muslims and blew the shofar a ram's horn that's trumpeted in the run-up to and during the Jewish High Holidays.

The Jewish new year, Rosh Hashanah, begins at sundown on Sunday, and in the succeeding weeks thousands of Israelis are expected to visit Jerusalem. Omer Barlev, Israel's minister in charge of police, told Kan public radio on Wednesday that Israeli authorities would not limit Jewish visits to the contested Jerusalem holy site known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

Visitations and prayers by hard-line Jewish radicals at the site have triggered

previous rounds of violence between Israel and the Palestinians.

For Jews, the site is the holiest on earth, the location of two ancient Temples. For Muslims, it is the home of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the third holiest place after Mecca and Medina. The shrine is the emotional epicenter of the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Officially, under a loose set of rules known as the "status quo," Jews are allowed to visit, but not pray at the site, which is managed by a Jordanian-run trust. But in recent years, the number of Jewish visitors to the site has steadily grown, and some hold Jewish prayer at the site under police protection.

Addressing reporters in the city of Gaza, Hamas leader

Mahmoud al-Zahar decried what he called a "blatant attack on the religious and Islamic status of the city and the mosque," saying Israel bore full responsibility for "the possibility of dragging the entire region into an open religious war."

He said the militant group, which rules the Gaza Strip, would "defend the rights and sanctities of our people by all possible means." Israel and Hamas have fought four wars in the Gaza Strip since the Islamist militant group seized power in 2007. The most recent battle, in May 2021, began when Hamas fired rockets at Jerusalem as Israeli nationalists planned to march through Jerusalem's historic Old City, which is home to holy sites to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. □



Masked Palestinians carry Palestinian and Hamas flags during Eid al-Fitr celebrations next to the next to the Dome of the Rock Mosque in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the Old City of Jerusalem, May 2, 2022.

Associated Press

Puerto Rico struggles to reach areas cut off by Fiona

By DÁNICA COTO

Associated Press

CAGUAS, Puerto Rico (AP)

— Hurricane Fiona was on a track Thursday to menace Bermuda and far-eastern Canada after leaving hundreds of people stranded across Puerto Rico, where it smashed roads and bridges and caused historic flooding.

Government officials have been working with religious groups, nonprofits and others braving landslides, thick mud and broken asphalt by foot to provide food, water and medicine for people in need, but they are under pressure to clear a path so vehicles can enter isolated areas soon.

Nino Correa, commissioner for Puerto Rico's emergency management agency, estimated that at least six municipalities across the island had areas that were cut off by Fiona, which struck as a Category 1 hurricane and was up to Category 4 power Thursday as it headed toward Bermuda. Manuel Veguilla said he has been unable to leave his neighborhood in the north mountain town of Caguas since Fiona swept in on Sunday.

"We are all isolated," he



A man points to a home that was collapsed by Hurricane Fiona at Villa Esperanza in Salinas, Puerto Rico, Wednesday, September 21, 2022.

Associated Press

said, adding that he worries about elderly neighbors, including his older brother who does not have the strength for the long walk it takes to reach the closest community.

Veguilla heard that municipal officials might open a pathway Thursday, but he doubted that would happen because large rocks covered a nearby bridge and the 10-foot space be-

neath it.

Neighbors have shared food and water dropped off by nonprofit groups, and the son of an elderly woman was able to bring back basic supplies by foot Wednesday, he said.

Veguilla said that in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, a Category 4 storm that struck five years ago and resulted in nearly 3,000 deaths, he and others used

picks and shovels to clear the debris. But Fiona was different, unleashing huge landslides.

"I cannot throw those rocks over my shoulder," he said. Like hundreds of thousands of other Puerto Ricans after Fiona, Veguilla had no water or electricity service, but said there is a natural water source nearby.

Fiona sparked an island-wide blackout when it hit

Puerto Rico's southwest region, which already was still trying to recover from a series of strong earthquakes in recent years. Some 62% of 1.47 million customers remained without power Thursday, four days after the storm, amid an extreme heat alert issued by the National Weather Service. Some 36% of customers, or nearly half a million, did not have water service.

The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency has sent hundreds of additional personnel to help local officials as the federal government approved a major disaster declaration and announced a public health emergency on the island.

Neither local nor federal government officials had provided any overall damage estimates from the storm, which dropped up to 30 inches of rain in some areas. More than 470 people and 48 pets remained in shelters.

"Our hearts go out to the people of Puerto Rico who have endured so much suffering over the last couple of years," said Brad Kieserman, vice president of operations and logistics at the Red Cross. □

132 pilot whales rescued out of 230 stranded in Australia

HOBART, Australia (AP) —

Wildlife experts on Thursday rescued 32 of the 230 whales that were found stranded on the wild and remote west coast of Australia's island state of Tasmania a day earlier.

Half the pod of pilot whales found stranded in Macquarie Harbour were presumed to still be alive on Wednesday, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania said. But only 35 had survived the pounding surf overnight, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service manager Brendon Clark said.

"Of the 35 that were remaining alive this morning, we've managed to refloat, rescue and release ... 32 of those animals, and so

that's a terrific result," Clark told reporters late Thursday at nearby Strahan.

"We still have three alive on the far northern end of Ocean Beach, but because of access restric-

tions, predominantly tidal influences, we just haven't been able to access those three animals safely today. But they'll be our priority in the morning," Clark added. The whales beached two

years to the day after the largest mass-stranding in Australia's history was discovered in the same harbor.

About 470 long-finned pilot whales were found on Sept. 21, 2020, stuck on sandbars. After a weeklong effort, 111 of those whales were rescued but the rest died.

The entrance to the harbor is a notoriously shallow and dangerous channel known as Hell's Gate.

Marine Conservation Program biologist Kris Carlyon said the dead whales would be tested to see if there were toxins in their systems that might explain the disaster.

"These mass stranding events are typically the result of accidental sort of

coming to shore, and that's through a whole host of reasons," Carlyon said.

Local salmon farmer Linton Kringle helped in the 2020 rescue effort and said Thursday's challenge was more difficult because the whales were in shallower and more exposed waters. Fourteen sperm whales were discovered Monday afternoon beached on King Island in Bass Strait between the Australian mainland and Tasmania.

Griffith University marine scientist Olaf Meynecke said it's unusual for sperm whales to wash ashore. He said that warmer temperatures could also be changing the ocean currents and moving the whales' traditional food. □



In this image made from a video, a rescuer pours water on one of stranded whales on Ocean Beach, near Strahan, Australia Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2022.

Associated Press

Aruba Tourism Authority and Aruban Olympic Committee sign partnership agreement



ORANJESTAD – For some time already, Aruba Tourism Authority and the Aruban Olympic Committee are in conversation to sign an agreement to benefit both parties. During a press conference yesterday, Ronella Croes, CEO of ATA; Wanda Broeksema, president of Aruban Olympic Committee (COA) and Nicole Hoevertsz, general secretary of COA signed this agreement, where ATA will become a partner of COA.

This partnership is a natural one seeing that the athletes cultivated and developed by COA represent our country with dignity and it is a big promotion for Aruba, through their participation in various competitions in different countries. Not forgetting the great promotion that Aruba receives during the Olympic Games.

IN the past, ATA has contributed with the logo and uniforms of COA through an

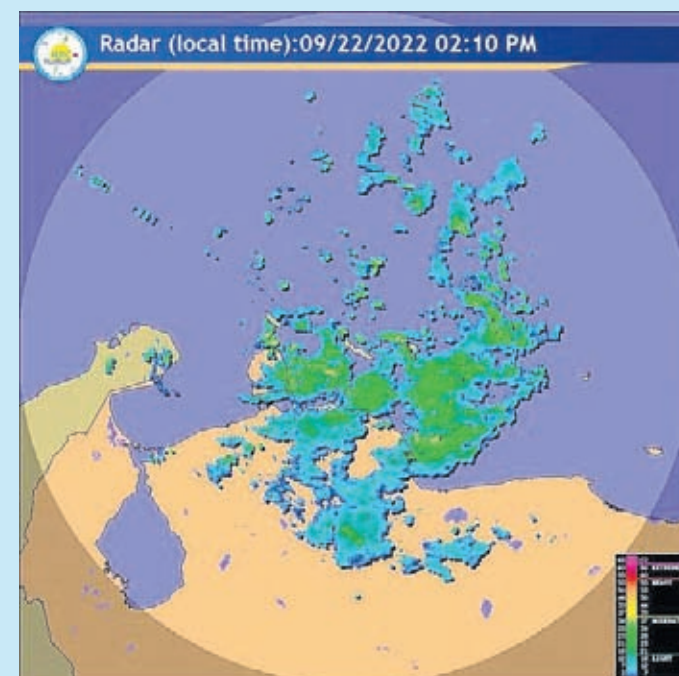
agency with which ATA worked in the past.

The Olympic values promoted by COA are completely aligned with the strategic objectives of ATA, which are among others to create wellness for the local community. In the case of COA this is by putting sport to the service of humanity as a philosophy of life, and in the case of ATA, through tourism.

ATA and COA share the opinion that investing in our people, our youth, is extremely important because they are our role models, not only when they represent Aruba internationally, but also in Aruba itself.

For both parties this is a beautiful moment, filled with positivity which creates new opportunities for our athletes, our tourism and for Aruba. □

Rainy weather arrived in Aruba



Bowls Noodle Bar invites you to a Happy Hour with a unique flavor

Bowls Noodle Bar recently opened at their new location at The Village, near the High Rise Hotels. To celebrate, they are launching their new Happy Hour from 9pm to 11pm every day.

Before the pandemic, Bowls Noodle Bar opened at the Hyatt by the airport, and was in the process of opening a second location at The Village when the pandemic hit. Due to the consequences of the pandemic, they decided to close the restaurant by the airport and open their new location at The Village. Their new location has been open for about six months to great results.

At The Village, night time is the best time. This is why they are now offering a daily Happy Hour, from 9pm to 11pm. It includes \$3 beer and \$5 cocktails.

Their cocktails are made in-house with a unique fusion of Asian flavors, for example, the popular purple Ube Mojito, with the flavor of traditional Ube, a Japanese dessert; the Blue Samurai with ginger flavor; and the refreshing Fruity Blossoms, with a flavor encompassing the Sakura, the famous Japanese Cherry Blossoms. You can try all these for only \$5 each during Happy Hour.

Fusion is at the core of the unique flavors of Bowls Noodle Bar, and this is expressed beautifully in their traditional Japanese soups. They are the only restaurant in Aruba that has most of the noodles traditionally used, Udon, Ramen, and Rice noodles. Ramen noodles, served fresh, are a surprising flavor for those who are used to dried ramen noodles. They also have Jasmine rice for the rice bowls.

Their authentic soups are the highlight and star. Chef Warren explains that there are four main components to the soup: the broth, the noodles, tare, and the oil, and these are very important for the traditional Japanese



Origin

The founders of Bowls Noodle Bar, Dexter Moreno and his partner Lai, opened their first location on Curaçao. They traveled to Japan to study Japanese Cuisine, and they fell in love with Japanese soup. Lai's parents are Chinese, and this is the start of the Asian-fusion flavors that are both surprising and delectable, combining Japanese, Chinese and even some Korean cuisine. Chef Warren was trained in these traditional flavors by the founders themselves.

They came to Aruba where Dexter approached some ex-colleagues in the industry to open a location on the island, and with a local team, opened Bowls Noodle Bar Aruba with a more extensive menu.

Opening hours are Monday to Thursday 5pm – 11:30pm; Friday and Saturday 5pm – 12pm; and Sunday 5pm – 11:30pm. Come visit for great atmosphere, delicious flavors, and a Happy Hour to remember! ☐



soups. At Bowls Noodle Bar, they have a wide variety of flavors to cater to every taste, like the famous Pork Chashu. It comes with fresh ramen noodles, and it's the pride of Bowls Noodle Bar. Chef Warren says that the broth for this soup takes two to three days to make, and is made in-house, with fresh and delicious ingredients. They also cater to vegetarians and vegans, with various options on the menu like tofu mushroom soup, vegetable gyoza, wonton, and fresh kimchi fermented at the restaurant.

The wok concept also allows you to create your own unique dish, choosing your base, protein, vegetables and sauce.



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Maintenance on three fountains in Oranjestad

Oranjestad - The Director of the Public Works Department (DOW, ing. Marlon Croes reported that the three fountains in Oranjestad are undergoing maintenance work.

These three fountains are:

Plaza Padu behind the Government's Office;
Plaza Daniel Leo;
Located between the Penha and La Moderna.

Plaza Padu Fountain

The lighting and electrical box were vandalized, and the lighting no longer works. The fountain is undergoing major maintenance, and the DOW ordered new limestone to replace the damaged limestone. Unfortunately, during the work, the contractor fell ill for some time, which caused a delay, but work will resume next week. Hopefully, they will complete it in a week or two.

Meanwhile, another contractor is installing the electrical cabinet and new lights so that they function optimally again.



Fountain Plaza Daniel Leo

This fountain had more pressing problems compared to the Plaza Padu fountain. Two palm trees planted in the middle of it grew considerably in the meantime. As a result, they cracked the fountain's wall, but fortunately, the DOW moved these palm trees to the Bushiri area. Once moved, they immediately started working on the maintenance work.

They repaired the cracked wall and ordered the stones and tiles, but these are not available in Aruba, so they have to wait for them to be delivered. Once the stones and tiles arrive, they will in-

stall them with the hope that to complete the job before the end of the year. The electrical cabinet and lighting are intact, so they now have to wait on the stones and tiles to make the fountain function in its full glory again.

Fountain between the Penha and La Moderna

This fountain has been a nuisance for some time, especially when it is full of water. The DOW pumped the water out, which is why it has not been operational for some time. The maintenance of this fountain is also in the DOW's plan for 2023. However, considering the nuisance, it is necessary to discuss the future of this fountain and the best approach with the DOW, the government, and commercial guilds. According to the feedback the DOW received, there is an urge to remove the fountain to stop the nuisance, but the DOW needs to evaluate it to come up with the best solution.

According to the Director, "we will be throwing the towel in the ring" if they remove the fountain because of the nuisance since it will limit the development of the city's center. One option is to completely renew and ensure that it is continuously kept in good condition and possibly install attributes that improve the area, such as good lighting, cleaning, maintenance, and supervision in the center which can reduce the nuisance. □



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Attractions and Sightseeing locations in Aruba



ORANJESTAD — There are enough sightseeing locations on the island to fill up a month-long vacation. Aruba's beaches are a big attraction, and although it's great to spend long days just relaxing on the beach and listening to the ocean, there are also plenty of opportunities to get to know Aruba's most attractive sights, historical and natural attractions, and museums. Check out these attractions you don't want to miss!

Blue Horses in Downtown, Oranjestad

This series of 8 sculptures were created by native Aruban artist Osaira Muyale. She named the project Paarden Baai, which translates to "Horse Bay". The statues were installed in 2015 and pay homage to the rich history of Aruba's horse trading industry. In the 17th Century Aruba was used by many countries (Europe, South America, Caribbean islands, and the Mediterranean) as a trading post. The most popular being cattle and horse trading. Horses were once the most important sources of livelihood for Aruba.

For 4 centuries the horse and cattle trade ran strong. At any given time Aruba was home to herds of thousands of horses that roamed the island. Aruba being the perfect trading post encouraged an extremely diverse culture and is the reason almost all Arubans speak more than 1 or 2 languages.

Each of the 8 bright royal blue horses is unique and carries its own name and personality. Pictured above is the mare Sinforosa, but you can also find Saturnina, Escapia, Rosalina, Eufrosina, Ambrosio, Bonifacia, and Celestina. The sculptures embody strength, nobility, grace, beauty and freedom. They represent the historical moment where the horses jumped from the ship decks into the Caribbean and swam to the Aruban Bay.

When you visit Aruba be sure to explore downtown Oranjestad and try to find all 8!



The Lourdes Grotto

Named in commemoration of the famous French religious landmark, was created under the guidance of a priest named "Erkamp" and parishioners in the year 1958. The grotto, a shrine built into the rocks is located in Seroe Preto, just off the main road to San Nicolas.

A statue of the Virgin Mary, weighing 700 kilos, was hoisted into place in the grotto. Every year, on February 11 (feast of Lady of Lourdes), a procession leaves from the St. Theresita church in San Nicolas to the grotto, where a mass is performed. The grotto is located road-side and can be visited daily. Just make sure you park safely in the event you wish to stop for pictures at this location.



Bubali Bird Sanctuary

Watch more than 80 species of migratory birds from the Bubali watch tower, overlooking their resting and breeding area. The observation tower allows birdwatchers to get a true birds' eye view. Migratory birds, looking for lush vegetation in which to nest, find an oasis within the Bubali Bird Sanctuary. The nearby water treatment facility empties into two inter-connected man-made bird ponds. Birds that inhabit the sanctuary include herons, egrets, gulls, skimmers, coots, ducks and more. Located within walking distance of the Palm Beach resorts, the Bubali Bird Sanctuary offers some unique bird watching opportunities. You can't miss it as it is located just in front of the historical Old Dutch Windmill. Make sure to bring your camera as many of these birds will randomly fly by the observation tower giving a little show. This is a great place to bring kids for a unique and possibly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be so close to the untamed.

The happiest island in the Caribbean is so much more than just sun, sand and sea. ☐

Prime minister of Aruba elaborates on interesting meetings during UNGA It is important to help smaller countries like Aruba to face recent challenges

ORANJESTAD – Currently, the prime minister of Aruba is in New York to attend the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA). Related to this, there are various meetings of interest for each country. Prime minister Evelyn Wever-Croes gave information about these meetings.

Leaders Meeting Local 2030 Network

One of the meetings attended was the “Leaders Meeting Local 2030 Network”, which was a meeting between leaders of countries in search of technical assistance and funds to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. She attended in order to create progress and wellness for each citizen of Aruba. The meeting was about the above-mentioned topics and also about energy. The meeting was directed by John Kerry, US special presidential envoy for climate.

Ministerial Meeting of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS)

Aside from this, another meeting started, namely the Ministerial Meeting of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), with other Caribbean and Latin American countries. “Seeing our economy of scale, there are many benefits for Aruba to associate with other countries”, Wever-Croes expressed.

Association of Caribbean States

Prime minister Wever-Croes gave a speech during the meeting Association of Caribbean States, in which the focus was on the fact that Aruba is fighting the effects of climate change, Covid, and the conflict in Ukraine.

In these times that are very difficult for every country, it is important to help smaller countries like Aruba to face these challenges. The prime minister expressed that this was a good a meeting, with various leaders in attendance like the



prime minister of Sint Maarten, Silveria Jacobs; chancellor of Guatemala, Mario Bucaro; Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of St. Vincent & The Grenadines, Keisal Peters and Venezuelan Vice Minister for Latin America and Caribbean, Rander Peña.

Local 2030 Island Network

Another meeting that took place was the “Local 2030 Island Network”, a meeting for Caribbean leaders. A group of 15 prime ministers and ministers met with US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry. Premier Wever-Croes presented the vision for energy for Aruba, which is a consensus among all stakeholders in Aruba, namely that by 2030 we need to reduce our dependence on Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) to 45%, and by 2050 Aruba needs to be carbon neutral.



The challenge is to execute this vision while dealing with the effects of Covid, the effects of climate change like the bad weather coming our way, and the effects of the conflict in Ukraine. However, there is commitment to work on this vision, according to the Prime Minister.

Finally, there was another interesting meeting between the premiers of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten with the deputy assistant secretary for Caribbean Affairs, Barbara Feinstein. The subject discussed was human trafficking. The American government wants to see Aruba put more emphasis on creating awareness regarding this issue and for Aruba to impose heavier punishment for this crime. Wever-Croes elaborated on what Aruba has been doing on this matter, with the limited capacity and resources available. □



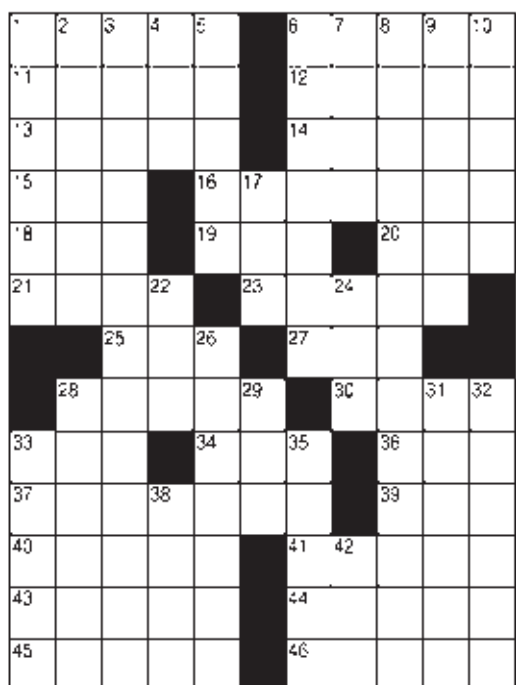
CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 41 Ferber
 - 1 Soak book
 - 6 Catchers' needs
 - 43 Critical asset
 - 11 Clear sky
 - 44 Full moon, for one
 - 12 Improvised
 - 45 Door sign
 - 13 Gladiator's spot
 - 46 More tender
 - 14 New Hampshire city

- 15 — Mahal
- 16 Give the oath of office to
- 18 Lucy of "Kill Bill"
- 19 Dawn goddess
- 20 Fall mo.
- 21 Cuts off
- 23 Drug bust units
- 25 Musician's job
- 27 "My country — of thee"
- 28 Stylishly quaint
- 30 Engrave
- 33 Possesses
- 34 Summer mo.
- 36 Period of history
- 37 Hawks' home
- 39 Baseball score
- 40 Bee attack

- DOWN**
- 1 John or Paul
 - 2 Transport for
 - 3 John Grisham novel
 - 4 Egg layer
 - 5 Wipe off
 - 6 Succeeds
 - 7 Creative germ
 - 8 John Grisham novel
 - 9 Invigorating drinks
 - 10 Fragrance
 - 17 Stir-fry pan
 - 22 Plop down
 - 24 Tell tales
 - 26 Friend of Potter and Weasley
 - 28 Wicker material
 - 29 Unconscious
 - 31 Liner trip
 - 32 Closet item
 - 33 Briskness
 - 35 Shocked sounds
 - 38 Price to play
 - 42 Cry of discovery



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three U's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

9-23

CRYPTOQUOTE

TOO CADWSB BATPR CAR
BTVR HPR TCA ... CAR TDP
BATPRB DCB BFD PDC QDCA
TOO CAR ODER DC BIFFKPCB.
— XADRE BRTCCOR

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: NATURE'S GREAT MASTERPIECE, AN ELEPHANT; THE ONLY HARMLESS GREAT THING. — JOHN DONNE

LUNG SWEET
ASIA SCORER
FELT POORLY
FREE FALL
WIND FALL
CARATS SIA
OBEYS KHAKI
OBI DIAPER
LAND FALL
RAIN FALL
REPAIR CLUE
EVENLY ASTO
PEAKS FOES

Yesterday's answer

More consumers buying organic, but U.S. farmers still wary

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE

Associated Press

CHURDAN, Iowa (AP) — In the 1970s when George Naylor said he wanted to grow organic crops, the idea didn't go over well.

Back then organic crops were an oddity, destined for health food stores or maybe a few farmers markets.

"I told my dad I wanted to be an organic farmer and he goes, 'Ha, ha, ha,'" Naylor said, noting it wasn't until 2014 that he could embrace his dream and begin transitioning from standard to organic crops.

But over the decades, something unexpected happened: demand for organics started increasing so fast that it began outstripping the supply produced in the U.S.

Now a new challenge has emerged: It's not getting consumers to pay the higher prices, it's convincing enough farmers to get past their organic reluctance and start taking advantage of the revenue pouring in. Instead of growing to meet the demand, the number of farmers converting to organic is actually dropping. Last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture committed up to \$300 million to recruit and help more farmers make the switch.

"It feels good," said Chris Schreiner, executive director of the organic-certifying organization Oregon Tilth, referring to the government help. "It's a milestone in the arc of this work."

Schreiner, who has worked at the Oregon-based organization since 1998, said expanding technical training is important given the vast differences in farming land conventionally and organically. Schreiner noted that one farmer told him that converting a conventional farmer was like asking "a foot doctor to become a heart surgeon."

The key difference is the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides as well as



George Naylor looks over organic apples grown on his farm, Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2022, near Churdan, Iowa.

Associated Press

genetically modified seeds. Most conventional farms rely on those practices but they are banned at organic farms. Instead, organic farmers must control weeds and pests with techniques such as rotating different crops and planting cover crops that squeeze out weeds and add nutrients to the soil. Crops can only be deemed organic if they are grown on land that hasn't been treated with synthetic substances for three years. During that period, farmers can grow crops, but they won't get the extra premium that accompanies organic crops. According to the USDA, the number of conventional farms newly transitioning to organic production dropped by about 70% from 2008 to 2019. Organic comprises about 6% of overall food sales, but only 1% of the country's farmland is in organic production, with foreign producers making up the gap. In the U.S., "There are so many barriers to farmers making that leap to organic," said Megan DeBates, vice president of government affairs for the Organic Trade Association.

While farmers seem hesitant, U.S. consumers aren't. Annual sales of organic products have roughly doubled in the past decade and now top \$63 billion, according to the Organic Trade Association. Sales are projected to climb up to 5.5% this year. That growth is clear to any-

one pushing a cart in an average supermarket, past bins of organic apples and bananas, through dairy and egg sections and along shelves brimming with organic beef and chicken.

The new USDA effort would include \$100 million toward helping farmers learn new techniques for growing organic crops; \$75 million for farmers who meet new conservation practice standards; \$25 million to expand crop insurance options and reduce costs; and \$100 million to aid organic supply chains and develop markets for organics.

Nick Andrews, an Oregon State University extension agent who works with organic farmers, called the USDA effort a "game changer." It should be especially attractive to farmers with small parcels of land because the added value of organic crops makes it possible to make significant money off even 25 to 100 acre (10 to 40 hectare) farms much smaller than the commercial operations that provide most of the country's produce. "I've seen organic farmers keep families in business who otherwise would go out of business," Andrews said.

Noah Wendt, who in the past few years has transitioned 1,500 acres (607 hectares) of land in central Iowa to organic, noted the shift has been "rocky" at times for him and his farming partner, Caleb Akin. □

Spain gives personhood status to Mar Menor salt-water lagoon

By JOSEPH WILSON
Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP)

— Spain granted personhood status Wednesday to what environmentalists call Europe's largest salt-water lagoon, which has suffered massive die-offs of marine life as it degrades due to coastal development and local farming. The new law came after a citizen-led push to provide better protection for the threatened ecosystem.

The initiative backed by more than 600,000 citizens will become law after Spain's Senate in Madrid voted in favor of the proposal to grant the Mar Menor lagoon on Spain's southeastern coast the status of personhood, the first time such a measure has been taken in Spain.

A total of 1,600 square kilometers (994 square miles) of the lagoon and the nearby Mediterranean coastline will now be legally represented by a group of caretakers made up of local officials, local citizens and scientists who work in the area. The grassroots group that pushed the measure hopes this will improve the ability to defend the lagoon from further degradation.

The World Wildlife Fund calls the Mar Menor Europe's largest salt-water lagoon. It's home to several species of fish, seahorses and the endangered European eel. The lagoon, which covers 135 square kilometers (84 square miles), is separated from the open sea by a thin strip of land 22 kilometers (13.7 miles) long that is a popular vacation spot dotted with hotels.

For years, ecologists and citizens have denounced the periodic die-offs of marine life in the lagoon due to the runoff of fertilizers from nearby farms.

In 2019, over 50,000 people marched in the nearby city of Cartagena to denounce the degradation of the lagoon. This month, Spain's government ap-



A man collects dead fish that have appeared by the shore of the Isle of Ciervo off La Manga, part of the Mar Menor lagoon in Murcia, Spain, Aug. 19, 2021.

Associated Press

proved 20 million euros (\$19.7 million) in aid to improve water treatment in towns near the Mar Menor as part of a recovery plan for the lagoon.

"So that natural disasters like those that have occurred, so that the episodes of mortality of fauna of the Mar Menor don't return, let's give this ecosystem its own rights," Senator

María Moreno said before the vote.

The law codifies the lagoon's right "to exist as an ecosystem and to evolve naturally" and recognizes its right to protection, conservation and restoration. In 2017, New Zealand passed a groundbreaking law granting personhood status to the Whanganui River. □



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Stewart, debuting Thomas help US beat Belgium in WCup opener

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
AP Basketball Writer

SYDNEY (AP) — It's been a whirlwind week for Alyssa Thomas.

She went from losing in the WNBA Finals on Sunday to flying 10,000 miles to Australia a day later to play for the United States in the World Cup. Thomas had 14 points, nine assists and seven rebounds in her debut for the Americans, who beat Belgium 87-72 in the tournament opener on Thursday.

After finding out she'd be on the U.S. roster, she never gave any thought to skipping the World Cup.

"Excited to be a part of this, been waiting a long time," the 30-year-old Thomas said.

U.S. coach Cheryl Reeve was impressed by what Thomas accomplished in the short turnaround time.

"It's what I expected Alyssa to do, as it's just what she does. She's a competitor and knows how to (play)," Reeve said. "WNBA players don't get enough credit for how well that they transition from overseas play to WNBA play to national team play."

Breanna Stewart scored 22 points and Jewell Loyd also scored 14 for the short-handed U.S. team, which



United States' Alyssa Thomas, left, shoots over Belgium's Julie Allemand during their women's Basketball World Cup game in Sydney, Australia, Thursday, Sept. 22, 2022.

Associated Press

was still missing Las Vegas Aces players A'ja Wilson, Chelsea Gray and Kelsey Plum. They were on their way to Australia after celebrating the franchise's first WNBA championship with a parade on Tuesday. The trio is expected to be in Sydney on Friday.

Thomas and her Connecticut Sun teammate Brionna Jones, who also arrived on Wednesday, were two of six players on the roster who hadn't played for the U.S.

in either the World Cup or Olympics.

This team is much different from the one that won a third straight gold in Spain in 2018. Sue Bird is retired and Diana Taurasi is out as well. Brittney Griner, who would have been on this team, is in a Russian jail after being convicted of drug possession last month in a politically charged case and sentenced to nine years in prison. The U.S. government is trying to secure her

release.

These teams met in the semifinals of the 2018 World Cup, with the Americans using a big third quarter to pull away and win by 16.

The Americans jumped out to a quick 12-0 lead before Belgium settled down to get within one. The U.S. lengthened the lead again behind Stewart and Loyd and was up 48-39 at the half.

The Americans went on a 12-4 run to start the third

quarter and put the game away.

The U.S. did a stellar job defensively on Belgian Emma Meesseman. The Chicago Sky star led the Olympics in scoring last year, averaging 26.8 points. She had four against the U.S., which has now won 23 consecutive World Cup games since losing in the 2006 semifinals to Russia. The Americans are three wins short of matching their record 26-game run from 1998-2006.

Julie Vanloo scored 13 points to lead Belgium.

"Really proud of this young team," Meesseman said. "Sometimes we lacked focus but a lot to be proud of and looking forward to the next few games."

NEW NUMBER

USA Basketball decided no one will wear Griner's No. 15 in this tournament. The Americans have used numbers 4 to 15 for a long time. Brionna Jones, who would have been 15, wore No. 16.

SCOREBOARD

Puerto Rico beat Bosnia and Herzegovina 82-58 for the country's first World Cup win. France topped Australia 70-57, spoiling the return of Lauren Jackson. Canada beat Serbia 67-60; Japan routed Mali 89-56 and China blew past South Korea 107-44. □

AP sources: Celtics considering suspension of Ime Udoka

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

The Boston Celtics are planning to discipline coach Ime Udoka, likely with a suspension, because of an improper relationship with a member of the organization, two people with knowledge of the matter told The Associated Press on Thursday. The people spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the reigning Eastern Conference champions have not revealed any details publicly. The exact punishment, including the length

of the possible suspension, has not been determined. ESPN first reported Wednesday night that a suspension was under consideration for the team policy violation. ESPN and The Athletic later reported that the Celtics' investigation revolves around whether Udoka had an inappropriate relationship with a member of the organization.

Losing Udoka would be a significant blow to a team that is widely considered among the favorites to contend for an NBA title this season, after falling only

two games short of winning the championship last season in his debut year.

The Celtics open training camp on Tuesday. If Udoka will not be allowed to lead the team, the task would almost certainly fall to one of his assistants. A possible candidate, Joe Mazzulla, interviewed for the Utah Jazz coaching job this summer, a position that ultimately went to Will Hardy who was Udoka's assistant in Boston last season.

Udoka's other assistant coaches are Damon Stoudemire, Ben Sullivan, Aaron



Boston Celtics coach Ime Udoka reacts during the fourth quarter of Game 6 of basketball's NBA Finals against the Golden State Warriors, Thursday, June 16, 2022, in Boston.

Associated Press

Miles and Tony Dobbins. Udoka had a brilliant first season as coach of the Celtics, finishing the regular season at 51-31 going 26-6 in the final 32 games and

leading Boston past Brooklyn, Milwaukee and Miami on the way to the NBA Finals. The Celtics lost the title series to the Golden State Warriors in six games. □

Federer to AP: Tennis will withstand big-name retirements

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**
AP Tennis Writer

LONDON (AP) — Roger Federer was paying attention right along with everybody else when Serena Williams played what is expected to be her last match three weeks ago at the U.S. Open.

"Not surprised. Just very similar to me, in many ways. We were expecting it to come at some point," Federer told The Associated Press. "You don't ever want players like Serena to ever retire. ... I just thought, 'What a great career.'"

He recognizes that their back-to-back exits after about a quarter-century each in tennis he is 41 and leaves with 20 Grand Slam titles and she turns 41 on Monday and has 23 major singles championships will spur some fans to move on from the sport.

Federer insists, though, that plenty will stick around.

"I mean, look, it's going to leave some fans with not the same taste for the game. We might lose some, because they say, 'OK, well that chapter for me closes, and I'll move on to another sport or another athlete,'" Federer said in an interview Thursday at the Laver Cup, where the final match of his stellar career will be in doubles alongside rival Rafael Nadal for Team Europe on Friday night.

"And some will stay with



Switzerland's Roger Federer, waves during a training session ahead of the Laver Cup tennis tournament at the O2 in London, Thursday, Sept. 22, 2022.

the game forever, because tennis is just a sport (that), once you're in it, you're normally in it. That's why I don't believe a lot of people will leave," he continued. "But they will not maybe wake up at 3 in the morning anymore for the Australian Open. Or they might not use their vacation time to go travel to a place.

Maybe they say for a few years, 'OK, let me go with a friend of mine and do a good adventure trip somewhere,' until they find their way back in."

He and Williams along with Nadal, a 36-year-old who

has a men's-record 22 Slam titles, and Novak Djokovic, a 35-year-old with 21 titles helped create a golden era in the sport, drawing new viewers and inspiring new players.

"Serena and Roger probably have more fans than anybody in tennis," said Taylor Fritz, a 24-year-old Californian who is the highest-ranked American man at No. 12 and a part of Team World in London. "It's tough to replace two people as iconic as them, but I still think there is a lot of exciting times ahead."

Still, what happens after they leave?

"These two players are irreplaceable. I don't think there is any question about that," said John McEnroe, who won seven major trophies from 1979 to 1984. He added this caveat: "The sport goes on, no matter what, and we have witnessed that in every sport over time."

Which is why Federer is among those optimistic about the future.

"I'm a big believer, always, that tennis is bigger than anybody," he said, "and it will always create new superstars."

Federer thinks highlight-reel shots that make their way

around on social media can help. So can the telling of each new top player's "captivating story."

McEnroe mentioned the sport's need to do better marketing of fresh faces.

Someone Federer believes could fit the "superstar" category is Carlos Alcaraz, the 19-year-old from Spain who won the U.S. Open and became the youngest man at No. 1 in the history of the ATP computerized rankings, which date to 1973.

Federer watched on TV some of Alcaraz's epic quarterfinal in Flushing Meadows against Jannik Sinner, a 21-year-old from Italy. It lasted 5 hours, 15 minutes, ending at 2:50 a.m. in New York that's 8:50 a.m. in Federer's home country of Switzerland, so the father of two sets of twins missed the fifth set, he explained, "because I had to bring the kids to school."

He came away impressed by both players.

"Super movers. Great ball-strikers, forehand and backhand," Federer said. "And I always said it: The best movers are the best players. We've seen it with Novak, we've seen it with Rafa, we've seen it with myself, Lleyton (Hewitt). You name it. ... And because you cover the court so, so well, you end up giving yourself more time and less stress." □

Ouch! Mets set MLB record with 106 hit batters in season

MILWAUKEE (AP) — The New York Mets set a major league record with 106 hit batters this season when Mark Canha was plunked twice and Luis Guillorme once in Wednesday's 6-0 loss to the Milwaukee Brewers.

New York has been hit one more time than the 2021 Cincinnati Reds.

"It's like a broken record at this point," Canha said. "We just kind of roll our eyes when it happens now and move on."

There's nothing you can do except capitalize on it, make it hurt, and it's all you can do. Yeah, sure, we're frustrated. It's like not a great thing to happen to your team."

Mets manager Buck Showalter has repeatedly complained about the amount of times his players have been hit. He signaled for the ball after Guillorme was struck on the left foot by Jake Cousins' slider in the ninth.

Asked what he planned to

do with the ball, Showalter quipped, "it would be obscene to tell you" before adding: "I gave it to the hitting coaches. They can do with it what they want to."

The Mets were banged up in other ways Wednesday, too. Mets center fielder Brandon Nimmo hurt his left quadriceps while stealing second base and left after the first inning. Left fielder Jeff McNeil banged up his right wrist against the chain-link fence in a failed attempt to catch Bros-



New York Mets' Mark Canha is hit by a pitch during the fifth inning of a baseball game against the Milwaukee Brewers Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2022, in Milwaukee.

Associated Press

seau's drive.

Canha was hit near the hip in the third and the ribs in the fifth. He has been hit a

big league-high 24 times this year and tied Seattle's Ty France for last year's high with 27. □

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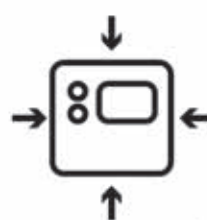
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